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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR JUNE 07, 2005

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for June 07, 2005. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

ZAMAN/CUMHURIYET/YENI

SAFAK/RADIKAL/HURRIYET/SABAH/GUNDEM/EVRENSEL: A medium-scale tremor in Bingol caused damage in many buildings and wounded 50 people. The Turkish Red Crescent dispatched relief items including food, blankets, and tents to the region where schools have been closed for two days as well.

ZAMAN: It is alleged that cooperation has been taking place between PKK and Hizbullah. According to a piece of news in the Aksiyon Magazine this week, PKK has given some of its C-4 explosives to Hizbullah in order to distract the security officials' attention. Taking advantage of the vacuum of authority in Iraq, PKK allegedly acquired C-4 explosives during the looting of military warehouses in Iraq and infiltrated approximately 1000 kilos of those explosives into Turkey. PKK leader Murat Karayilan reportedly announced in a statement in May that PKK signed a new agreement with Hizbullah and wanted to benefit from the Hizbullah's experiences in urban areas.

ZAMAN/GUNDEM: The dead body of the Syrian Kurdish religious figure Sheikh Mohammad Mashuk Xaznevi, was found in Deir el Zor town on June 1, 2005 after he was reportedly kidnapped from the Islamic Studies Center in Damascus on May 8 and allegedly exposed to torture for three weeks. The Kurds hold Damascus responsible for the assassination and undertook demonstrations in his birthplace Qamichli, where 5 persons were reportedly killed and 33 others, including 3 policemen, wounded during the tumult.

YENI SAFAK/HURRIYET: The European Commission donated 12 million Euros to 32 projects in nine Southeastern provinces aiming to promote sites of historical value there and promote tourism. Some of the projects that will benefit from the donation are: Restoration of the Gaziantep castle and the tea shops beneath it; the project by the Chamber of Commerce of Gaziantep to promote the tourism potential in Zeugma, Halfeti, and Runkale; the project aiming to support handicrafts and thus create employment opportunities for women by the Diyarbakir Chamber of Commerce and Industry; the Sirnak Foundation to Develop Sirnak and Its Townships; the project to promote hand woven fabric indigenous to Sirnak; the restoration of a 150 year-old stone-house and publicity of the cuisine of Kilis; the project aiming to develop mohair weaving unique to Siirt and the Renovation of Veysel Karani Complex, Socio-Economic Examination of the Syriac Culture. Hurriyet newspaper reports that the projects that will benefit from the donation will be completed within 24 months.

EKSPRES/HURRIYET/EVRENSEL: After extension of the use of Incirlik Air Base by the Turkish cabinet, four C-17 U.S. cargo planes flew to the base and have been deployed there as of June 12. It is reported that logistical items, such as tents, food, clothing and spare parts, will be brought to the base by civilian cargo planes and moved to Iraq and Afghanistan by the US Air Force's C-17 cargo planes.

GUNDEM: The Syrian government reportedly notified the family of HPG (PKK affiliated "Public Protection Forces") militant Nezire Qasim, who had been killed in May 12 clashes with GOT forces in Tunceli, that it would not admit her body into Syria because she did not have a Syrian passport. Nezire's brother and uncle visited her grave in Ovacik of Tunceli.

GUNDEM: Approximately one thousand people reportedly attended HPG militant Sami Comak's funeral in Bingol. Comak apparently died when a snake bit him in rural Tunceli. The crowd shouted "Martyrs don't die," while his brother said "we do not want to see anybody shedding tears." Meanwhile, soldiers killed in clashes in Cicekli village of Tunceli were buried in Gaziantep, Kars, and Denizli. Gaziantep Governor Lutfullah Bilgin, the Fifth Armored Brigade Commander, Gaziantep Mayor, and DEHAP Provincial Chairman attended the funeral in Gaziantep.

GUNDEM: It is reported that the GOT forces started a large-scale operation in Sirnak-Besta region and deployed troops at spots of strategic importance in the Cele Buka and Mame Mus regions.

GUNDEM: In Adana, five students were reportedly apprehended in their houses in Barajyolu quarter of the town on charges of membership to an outlawed organization. They were put in the Kurkculer prison following their arraignment.

EVRENSEL: Approximately ten-thousand people from Diyarbakir, Siirt, Bingol, Tunceli, Elazig, Mardin, Batman, and Sanliurfa are reportedly to have attended a meeting held in Diyarbakir under the name of "We are out in squares for a Democratic Turkey, for the right of education in the mother tongue, and against the closing of Egitim-Sen." Mayor Osman Baydemir and other subordinate mayors also reportedly attended the meeting.

Police reportedly detained 15 persons from the group that had come from Siirt on the charges of shouting "illegal slogans." Approximately 150 persons reportedly undertook a sit-in protest for three hours because of the detentions.

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